Laura Jean Libbey's TALKS ON HEART TOPICS

HONEYMOON WITH HIS FOLKS.

Go to friends for advice;
To woman for pity;
To strangers for charity;
To relatives for nothing.

Every young man means well, no doubt, when he urges the girl whom he is so soon to make his bride to consent to spend their honeymoon with his folks. If he can only spare two weeks from business, and his folks, whom he has not seen for years, live in a distant city, he is usually extremely anxious to "kill two birds with one stone," as it were.

"You will be sure of the heartiest of welcomes," he declares enthusiastically, adding: "They love you, dear, already quite as much from your letters to them as for my sake." The bride-to-be, seeing that he has his heart set upon it, is reluctant to say him nay.

In the far-off boyhood home the old folks are greatly excited over the joyful intelligence that Charlie has really consented that the honeymoon of his bride and himself shall be spent with them. They inspect the spare room carefully. Are the old-fashioned furniture and the faded carpet good enough? Aunt Hester turns up her nose at the query. "If she's a sensible young woman, she will take things as she finds 'em. If she's an upstart, you couldn't please her if you refurnished the place from top to bottom. My advice is to keep her in her place from the first minute she crosses the threshold. If she sees she can boss and can get the upper hand, you'll have trouble with her from the start." With this and sundry other warnings ringing in their ears, the old couple await the coming of the auspicious day and the bride and groom with fear and trembling.

Father goes to the station to meet them. Instead of the buxom young woman they had somehow pictured her to be, he beholds a frail young thing in bridal gray—from gray tulle hat with its pale bluish rose to the smart pearl-gray boots and gray gloves. The lovely apparition almost takes his mother's breath away. No wonder such a lovely girl had taken her boy's heart by storm. She feels a timidity about approaching and offering a kiss to the beautiful city girl—even though she had just wedded her Charlie.

Aunt Hester frowned her disapproval of her on sight. "She'll want to sit right down and be waited on like a queen," she whispered sharply in her sister-in-law's ear. "You'd better let me manage her." She led the bride up to her room to inspect it while mother and son were crying and laughing in the same breath in each other's fond embrace. Quite as soon as Aunt Hester gets the bride alone, she proceeds to "take the starch out of the stuck-up thing," as she mentally phrases it. "You won't find this a hotel, an' there's no maids to wait on you, so you'd better be prepared to do for yourself. We eat breakfast at eight o'clock sharp, and you'd better be on hand. If you want any eggs cooked any new-fangled way, you'll have to do the cooking of 'em. If it rains, be sure to pull down those windows. Good-night."

The little bride does her best to keep back her tears as Charlie strides briskly into the room. "Didn't you love the old folks on sight, kid?" he asks blithely, continuing: "I knew you would. And isn't Aunt Hester the dearest, kindest soul in the world? We will have a delightful honeymoon here. Everyone will make it so pleasant for us."

The bride kept her own counsel. She wasn't so sure about happiness. She wished she hadn't consented to spend her honeymoon with husband's relatives.

GIVING UP WEALTH FOR LOVE.

She to him will reach her hand,
And gazing in his eyes will stand,
And know her love and weep for glee
And cry: "Long, long I've looked for thee."

How much is love worth to the average young woman? That is the question honest-hearted men have been asking themselves the world over, in all climes and under every sun. Many a poor youth, earnest of purpose, whose life, heart and deeds were clean, whose ambition was boundless and whose honor none could gainsay, has seen his love dream shattered by an aged gray-beard crossing his sweetheart's path, whose only claim to attention was his money bags.

No wonder such a youth loses all faith in love's wondrous power, believing that the majority of feminine hearts could be lured to love's bargain counter and be bought by the one who could bid the highest amount of gold, hard, soulless gold.

It may be earnestly and safely stated that not one young girl among thousands would, of her own volition, prefer gilded age to poor, but warm-hearted youth and the love that satisfies. Overambitious relatives and illy-chosen friends may influence and fairly coerce many a girl to give up a poor lover for a wealthy one, but if left to follow out her own promptings of heart her choice will always fall upon the man who has gained her love.

This is especially true of young widows. The girl dreams of love, not knowing what she will miss if she exchanges it for the dross of wealth. The widow knows full well the true meaning of real love to a woman—that it is more precious by far than all the wealth of the Indies. If she has married the first time for wealth and position, she never makes so fatal a mistake the second time.

Apropos of this subject, all of the social world has been intensely excited over the fact that one of New York's youngest and wealthiest and most beautiful widows has given up a princely fortune and stepped out of a marble palace to wed the man of her choice. Her late husband's will subjected her to those conditions should she rewed. The whole world wondered when a young and handsome suitor appeared upon the scene which way her choice would turn—to the cold marble walls with their wealth of paintings looking down upon her, and the checks, each one a fortune in itself, which paid her for remaining the dead multimillionaire's widow, heaped up before her or the warm-thrilling arms and eager pulsing, responsive heart of the young man who could not count his fortune in anywhere like such colossal figures.

There was no struggle to decide. Could the marble palace, the grand old paintings, plates of gold, liveried servants and all the trappings of wealth and the power of a grand old name, soothe a heart sighing for the clasp of a human hand whose magnetic touch made her heart beat faster, a near presence, dearer yet than all others, that could turn loneliness into a heaven of cheeriness, light, joy and the love which makes living worth while?

The one experience of marrying for wealth is enough for any woman. It teaches her the grand lesson that love which is God-given is not for barter or sale; that it is priceless, the father's richest, most wonderful of blessings with which he endows his children. True love outweighs wealth every time. Wealth can only procure worldly things; it cannot buy love or live. Love, returned, repays all sorrows. It is life's staff.

GIRLS ALONE ON VACATIONS.

Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control—
These three alone lead life to sovereign power.
Yet not for power (power by herself would
Come uncalled for), but to live by law,
Acting the law we live by without fear;
And, because right is right, to follow right
Were wisdom in the scorn of consequence.

No one longs more for vacation time to roll around than the young girl who is a wagearner in office, shop or factory. The hard treadmill of work has stolen the roses from her cheeks and the elasticity from her step. She would have a fortnight's rest free from care.

But can she go away from home alone? Her father says yes, of course she can—why not? The right kind of a girl can take care of herself anywhere and under all circumstances. The mother is not quite so sure of that. She knows that it is the companions with whom a young girl is brought in contact during the summer vacation trips that can make or mar her life.

The chaperoned girl is not lonely for want of comrades. The working girl yearns for someone to speak to. In the most famous hostelries or to the country town inn comes the vampire woman always ready to prey upon feminine innocence. She ingratiates herself in the good graces of girls who are alone on their vacations, and therefore unprotected, and introduces them to a class of young men they should not know. It is she who beguiles them into the habit of staying out late at night, to accept treats in the shape of sodas from these men who think it a great lark to substitute something stronger for the pink lemonade or soda, laughing hilariously at the girl's plight and subsequent discomfiture.

Girls going away alone on their vacations cannot be too careful in regard to forming new acquaintances, male or female. Girls should be told at an early age the necessity and responsibility of guarding themselves and warding off danger in whatever form it may come to them.

Women should take to heart the warning regarding summer treats. In nine cases out of ten a man has no further intention than being gallant. The tenth man may not be so noble and disinterested in regard to the consequences. It is not always possible for a girl to find vacation accommodations among friends or at a place where she can spend a few pleasant days or weeks for the small sum she can afford to pay. Girls' camps are a boon to girls who must go alone on their vacation outings. There is always an elderly woman or two of the highest respectability and a love for her duty, to mother the girls and watch carefully so that no ewe lamb wanders astray.

Under such chaperonage the hearts of the anxious ones at home know no worry. There is a world of comfort in knowing that a girl is in safe company—that she can enjoy every moment of her vacation and no harm assail her. Rather than consent to let your girls go alone on their vacation summer outings to places you are not well acquainted with, send them to girls' camps.

THE CITY OF NUMBERED DAYS

BY FRANCIS LYNDE

CHAPTER XXII—Continued.

—15—

Harlan's lean, fine-lined face was a study in changing emotions as he read. But at the end there was an aggrieved look in his eyes, mirroring the poignant regret of a newsman who has found a priceless story which he dares not use.

"It's ripping," he sighed, "the biggest piece of fireworks a poor devil of a newspaper man ever had a chance to touch off. But, of course, I can't print it."

"Why 'of course'?"

"For the same reason that a sane man doesn't peek down the muzzle of a loaded gun when he is monkeying with the trigger. I want to live a little while longer."

Brouillard looked relieved.

"I thought, perhaps, it was on account of your investments," he said.

"Not at the present writing," amended Harlan with a grin. "I got a case of cold feet when we had that little let-up a while back, and when the market opened I cleaned up and sent the sure-enough little round dollars home to Ohio."

"And still you won't print this?"

"I'd like to; you don't know how much I'd like to. But they'd hang me and sack the shop. I shouldn't blame 'em. If what you have said here ever gets into cold type, it's good-by Mirapolis. Why, Brouillard, the whole United States would rise up and tell us to get off the map. You've made us look like thirty cents trying to block the wheels of a million dollars—and that is about the real size of it, I guess."

"Then it is your opinion that if this were printed it would do the business?"

"There isn't the slightest doubt about it."

"Thank you, Harlan, that is what I wanted to find out—if I had made it strong enough. It'll be printed. I'll put it on the wires to the Associated Press. I was merely giving you the first hack at it."

"Gee—gosh! hold on a minute!" exclaimed the newsman, jumping up and snapping his fingers. "If I weren't such a dod-gasted coward! Let me run in a few 'It is alleged's', and I'll chance it."

"No; it goes as it lies. There are no allegations. It is merely a string of cold facts, as you very well know. Print it if you like, and I'll see to it that they don't hang you or loot the office. I have two hundred of the safest men on my force under arms tonight, and we'll take care of you. I'm in this thing for blood, Harlan, and when I get through, this little obstruc-

"If What You Have Said Here Ever Gets Into Cold Type, It's Good-by!"

tion in the way of progress that Cortwright and his crowd planned, and that you and I and a lot of other fools and knaves helped to build, will be cooling itself under two hundred feet of water."

"Good Lord!" said the editor, still unable to compass the barbaric suddenness of it. Then he ran his eye over the scratch sheets again. "Does this formal notice that the waste-gates will be closed three weeks from tomorrow go as it stands?" he inquired.

"It does. I have the department's authority. You know as well as I do that unless a fixed day is set there will be no move made. We are all trespassers here, and we've been warned off. That's all there is to it. And if we can't get our little belongings up into the hills in three weeks it's our loss; we had no business bringing them here."

The editor looked up with a light of a new discovery in his eyes. "You say 'we' and 'our.' That reminds me; Garner told me no longer ago than this afternoon that you are on record for something like a hundred thousand dollars' worth of choice Mirapolis front feet. How about that?"

Brouillard's smile was quite heartwhole.

"I've kept my salary in a separate pocket, Harlan. Besides that—well, I came here with nothing and I shall go away with nothing. The rest of it was all stage money."

"Say—by hen!" ejaculated the owner of the Spotlight. Then, smiting the desk: "You ought to let me print that. I'd run it in red headlines across the top of the front page. But, of course, you won't. . . . Well, here goes for the fireworks and a chance of a soaped rope." And he pushed the bell button for the copy boy.

Late as it was when he left the Spotlight office, Brouillard waited on the corner for a Quadjenal car, and, catching one, he was presently whisked out to the ornate villa in the eastern suburb. There was a light in the hall and another in a room to the rear, and it was Amy who answered his touch of the bell-push.

"No, I can't stay," he said, when she asked him in. "But I had to come, if it was only for a minute. The deed is done. I've had my next-to-the-last round-up with Mr. J. Wesley Cortwright, and tomorrow's Spotlight will fire the sunset gun for Mirapolis. Is your father here?"

"No. He and Stevie are up at the mine. I am looking for them on every car."

"When they come, tell your father it's time to hike. Are you all packed?"

She nodded. "Everything is ready."

"All right. Three of my teams will be here by midnight, at the latest. The drivers and helpers will be good men and you can trust them. Don't let anything interfere with your getting safely up to the mountain tonight. There'll be warm times in Gomorrah from this on and I want a free hand—which I shouldn't have with you here."

"Oh, I'm glad, glad!—and I'm just as scared as I can be!" she gasped with true feminine inconsistency. "They will single you out first; what if I am sending you to your death, Victor! Oh, please don't go and break my heart the other way across by getting killed!"

He drew a deep breath and laughed. "You don't know how good it sounds to hear you say that—and say it in that way. I sha'n't be reckless. But I'm going to bring J. Wesley and his crowd to book—they've got to go, and they've got to turn the 'Little Susan' loose."

"They will never do that," she said sadly.

"I'll make them; you wait and see."

She looked up with the violet eyes kindling.

"I told you once that you could do anything you wanted to—if you only wanted to hard enough. I believed it then; I believe it now."

"No," he denied with a smile that was half sorrowful, "I can't make two hills without a valley between them. I've chased down the back track like a little man—for love's sake, Amy—and I've burned all the bridges behind me as I ran; namely, the sham deeds to the pieces of reservoir bottom I'd been buying. But when it is all over I shall be just where I was when we began—exactly one hundred thousand dollars short of being able to say: 'Come, girl, let's go and get married.'"

"But father owes you a hundred thousand dollars," she said quickly.

"Not in a hundred thousand years. O most inconsistent of women! Didn't we agree that that money was poisoned? It was the purchase price of an immortal soul, and I wouldn't touch it with a pair of tongs. That is why your father couldn't use it; it belonged to the devil and the devil wanted it back."

"Father won't take that view of it," she protested.

"Then you'll have to help me to bully him, that's all. But I must go and relieve Grizzy, who is doing guard duty at the mixers. . . . Tell your father—no, that isn't what I meant to say, it's this—" and his arms went suddenly across the hundred-thousand-dollar chasm.

CHAPTER XXIII

Exodus

In the Yellowstone National park there is an apparently bottomless pit which can be instantly transformed into a spouting, roaring Vesuvius of boiling water by the simple expedient of dropping a bar of soap into it.

The Spotlight went to press at three o'clock. By the earliest graying of dawn, and long before the sun had shown itself above the eastern Timanyonis, Brouillard's bar of soap was melting and the Mirapolitan underdepths were beginning to heave. Like wildfire, the news spread from lip to lip and street to street, and by sunrise the geyser was retching and vomiting, belching debris of cries and maledictions, and pouring excited and riotous crowds into Chigringo avenue.

Most naturally, the Spotlight office was the first point of attack, and Harlan suffered loss, though it was inconsiderable. At the battering down of the doors the angry mob found itself confronting the young reclamation service chief and four members of his staff, all armed. Brouillard spoke briefly and to the point.

"I am the man who wrote that article you've been reading, and Mr. Harlan printed it as a matter of news. If you have anything to say to me you know where to find me. Now, move on and let Mr. Harlan's property alone or somebody will get hurt."

Nobody stayed to press the argument at the moment. An early-morning mob is proverbially incoherent and incohesive; and, besides, loaded Winchesters in the hands of five determined men are apt to have an eloquence which is more or less convincing.

But with the opening of business the geyser spouted again. The exchanges were mobbed by eager sellers, each frenzied struggler hoping against hope that he might find someone simple enough to buy. At ten o'clock the bank

The Spotlight Office Was the First Point of Attack.

closed—"Temporarily," the placard notice said. But there were plenty to believe that it would never open again.

By noon the trading panic had exhausted itself a little, though the lobby and cafe of the Metropole were crowded, and anxious groups quickly formed around any nucleus of rumor or gossip in the streets.

Between one and two o'clock, while Brouillard, Leshington and Anson were hastily eating a luncheon sent over to the mapping room from Bongras', Harlan drifted in.

"Spill your news," commanded Leshington gruffly. "What's doing, and who's doing it?"

"Nobody, and nothing much," said Harlan, answering the two queries as one. "The town is falling apart like a bunch of sand and the get-away has set in. Two full trains went east this forenoon, and two more are scheduled for this afternoon if the railroad people can get the cars here."

"'Good-by, little girl, good-by,'" hummed Grislow, entering in time to hear the report of the flight.

But Leshington was shaking his big head moodily. "Laugh about it if you can, but it's no joke," he growled. "When the froth is blown away and the bubbles quit rising, there are going to be some mighty bitter settlings left in the bottom of the stein."

"You're right, Leshington," said Harlan, gravely. "What we're seeing now is only the shocked surprise of it—as when a man says 'Ouch!' before he realizes that the dog which has bitten him has a well-developed case of rabies. We'll come to the hydrophobic stage later on."

By nightfall of this first day the editor's ominous prophecy seemed about to reach its fulfillment. The avenue was crowded again and the din and clamor was the roar of a mob infuriated. Brouillard and Leshington had just returned from posting a company of the workmen guard at the mixers and crushers, when Grislow, who had been scouting on the avenue, came in.

"Harmless enough yet," he reported. "It's only some more of the get-away that Harlan was describing. Just the same, it's something awful. People are fairly climbing over one another on the road up the hill to the station—with no possible hope of getting a train before some time tomorrow. Teamsters are charging twenty-five dollars a load for moving stuff that won't find cars for a week, and they're scarce at the price."

Leshington, who was not normally a profane man, opened his mouth and said things.

"If the Cortwright crowd had one man in it with a single idea beyond saving his own miserable stake!" he stormed. "What are the spell-binders doing, Grizzy?"

The hydrographer grinned. "Cortwright and a chosen few left this afternoon, hotfoot, for Washington, to get the government to interfere. That's the story they'd like to have the people believe. But the fact is, they ran away from Judge Lynch."

"Yes; I think I see 'em coming back—not!" snorted the first assistant. Then to Brouillard: "That puts it up to us from this out. Is there anything we can do?"

Brouillard shook his head. "I don't want to stop the retreat. I've heard from President Ford. The entire western division will hustle the business of emptying the town, and the quicker it is done the sooner it will be over."

For a tumultuous week the flight from the doomed city went on, and the overtaxed single-track railroad wrought miracles of transportation. Not until the second week did the idea of material salvage take root, but, once started, it grew like Jonah's gourd. Hundreds of wrecking crews were formed.

"It begins to look a little better," said Anson on the day in the third week when the army of government laborers began to strip the final forms from the top of the great wall which now united the two mountain shoulders and completely overshadowed and dominated the dismantled town. "If the avenue would only take its hunch and go, the agony would be over."

"It will be worse before it is better," was the young chief's prediction, and the foreboding verified itself that night. Looting of a more or less brazen sort had been going on from the first, and by nine o'clock of the night of prediction a loosely organized mob of drink-maddened terrorists was drifting from street to street, and there were violence and incendiarism to follow.

Though the property destruction mattered little, the anarchy it was breeding had to be controlled. Brouillard and Leshington got out their reserve force and did what they could to restore some semblance of order. It was little enough; and by ten o'clock the amateur policing of the city had reduced itself to a double guarding of the dam and the machinery, and a cordoning of the Metropole, the reclamation service buildings, and the Spotlight office. For Harlan, the dash of sporting blood in his veins asserting itself, still stayed on and continued to issue his paper.

"I said I wanted to be in at the death, and for a few minutes tonight I thought I was going to be," he told Brouillard, when the engineer had posted his guards and had climbed the stair to the editorial office. Then he asked a question: "When is this little hell-on-earth going to be finally extinguished, Victor?"

Instead of answering, Brouillard put a question of his own: "Did you know that Cortwright and Schermerhorn and Judge Williams came back this evening, Harlan?"

"I did," said the newspaper man. "They are registered at the Metropole as large as life."

"What's up?"

"That is what I'd like to know. There's a bunch of strangers at the Metropole, too, a sheriff's posse, Poodles thinks; at least, there is a deputy from Red Butte with the crowd."

Harlan tilted back in his chair and scanned the ceiling reflectively. "This thing is getting on my nerve, old man. I wish we could clean the slate and all go home."

"It is going to be cleaned. Notices will be posted tomorrow warning everybody that the waste-gates will be closed promptly on the date advertised."

"When is it? Things have been revolving too rapidly to let me remember such a trivial item as a date."

"It is the day after tomorrow, at noon."

The owner of the Spotlight nodded. "Let her go, Gallagher. I've got everything on skids, even the presses. Au revoir—or perhaps one should say, Au reservoir."

Fresh shoutings and a crackling of pistols arose in the direction of the plaza, and Brouillard got up and went to a window. The red glow of other house burnings loomed against the somber background of Jack's mountain.

"Senseless savages!" he muttered, and then went back to the editor. "I don't like this Cortwright reappearance, Harlan. I wish I knew what it means."

"Let's see," said the newsman thoughtfully; "what is there worth taking that they didn't take in the sauve qui peut? By Jove—say! Did old David Massingale get out of J. Wesley's clutches before the lightning struck?"

"I wish I could say 'Yes', and be sure of it," was the sober reply. "You knew about the thieving stock deal, or what you didn't know I told you. Well, I had Massingale, as president, call a meeting of directors—which never met. Afterward, acting under legal advice, he went on working the mine, and he's been working it ever since, shipping a good bit of ore now and then, when he could squeeze it in between the get-away trains. Of course, there is bound to be a future of some sort; but that is the present condition of affairs."

"How about those notes in the bank? Wasn't Massingale personally involved in some way?"

Brouillard bounded out of his chair as if the question had been a point-blank pistol shot.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)